

Patent
Attorney's Docket No.: 033072-092
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REMARKS

The specification has been amended to include proper mention of the priority claim in the specification, see MPEP § 201.11, paragraph III D, attached. This priority was claimed on the Transmittal letter and Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney as filed with the application. This priority was acknowledged on the official filing receipt.

If any questions remain the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being filed by facsimile transmission to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA. 22313-1450, to facsimile number 1.703.872.9306 on this date, 7/7/04.

by Sandra B. Paye
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Application No. A, filed ---," then Application No. C must have a reference to Application No. B and provisional Application No. A, and Application No. B must have a reference to provisional Application No. A.

There is no limit to the number of prior applications through which a chain of copendency may be traced to obtain the benefit of the filing date of the earliest of a chain of prior copending applications. See *In re Henriksen*, 399 F.2d 253, 158 USPQ 224 (CCPA 1968).

A nonprovisional application that directly claims the benefit of a provisional application under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) must be filed within 12 months from the filing date of the provisional application. Although an application that itself directly claims the benefit of a provisional application is not required to specify the relationship to the provisional application, if the instant nonprovisional application is not filed within the 12 month period, but claims the benefit of an intermediate nonprovisional application under 35 U.S.C. 120 that was filed within 12 months from the filing date of the provisional application and claimed the benefit of the provisional application, the intermediate application must be clearly identified as claiming the benefit of the provisional application so that the Office can determine whether the intermediate nonprovisional application was filed within 12 months of the provisional application and thus, whether the claim is proper. Applicant must state, for example, "this application is a continuation of Application No. C, filed ---, which is a continuation of Application No. B, filed ---, which claims the benefit of provisional Application No. A, filed ---." A benefit claim that merely states "this application claims the benefit of nonprovisional Application Nos. C and B, and provisional Application No. A" would be improper. Where the benefit of more than one provisional application is being claimed, the intermediate nonprovisional application(s) claiming the benefit of each provisional application must be indicated. Applicant must state, for example, "this application is continuation of Application No. D, filed ---, which is a continuation-in-part of Application No. C, filed ---, Application No. D claims the benefit of provisional Application No. B, filed ---, and Application No. C claims the benefit of provisional Application No. A, filed ---." If a benefit claim to a provisional application is submitted without an indication that an inter-

mediate application directly claims the benefit of the provisional application and the instant nonprovisional application is not filed within the 12 month period or the relationship between each nonprovisional application is not indicated, the Office will not recognize such benefit claim and will not include the benefit claim on the filing receipt. Therefore, a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a) and the surcharge set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(t) will be required if the intermediate application and the relationship of each nonprovisional application are not indicated within the period set forth in 37 CFR 1.78(a).

D. Reference Must Be Included in the Specification or an Application Data Sheet (ADS)

The reference required by 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5) must be included in an ADS or the specification must contain or be amended to contain such reference in the first sentence following the title. If an applicant includes a benefit claim in the application but not in the manner specified by 37 CFR 1.78(a) (e.g., if the claim is included in an oath or declaration or the application transmittal letter) within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 1.78(a), the Office will not require a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a) and the surcharge under 37 CFR 1.17(t) to correct the claim if the information concerning the claim was recognized by the Office as shown by its inclusion on the filing receipt. If, however, a claim is not included in the first sentence of the specification or in an ADS and is not recognized by the Office as shown by its absence on the filing receipt, the Office will require a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a) and the surcharge to correct the claim. The Office may not recognize any benefit claim where there is no indication of the relationship between the nonprovisional applications or no indication of the intermediate nonprovisional application that is directly claiming the benefit of the provisional application. Even if the Office has recognized a benefit claim by entering it into the Office's database and including it on applicant's filing receipt, the benefit claim is not a proper benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) or 35 U.S.C. 120 and 37 CFR 1.78 unless the reference is included in an ADS or in the first sentence of the specification and all other requirements are met.